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ABSTRACT

A project is described which sought to determine what minority group faculty members think about a variety of issues associated with life at The University of Toledo (Ohio). The project began by grappling with the issue of identifying who were members of selected minority groups. Interviews conducted with the faculty members covered many areas of interest: personnel, research, career advancement, university governance, social life, university goal of recruitment of "minority" group members, affirmative action, tolerance, climate for minority group students, university problems, and recommendations. The picture that emerged from the interviews is that African Americans and Hispanic faculty members feel a strong sense of alienation from the University and a corresponding sense of professional and personal isolation. Interviewees did not see the University as a tolerant place where diversity is positively valued. Respondents in the College of Education were particularly strong in these views. Respondents regarded the University's official desire to increase the number of minority group members at all levels as little more than empty rhetoric. There seemed to be virtually no contact between Hispanics and African Americans on campus. Recommendations conclude the monograph. (JDD)

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Some African American and Hispanic Voices From The University of Toledo

A Monograph
by

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1991

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Some African American and Hispanic Voices From The University of Toledo

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Preface

This project began at an otherwise non-descript meeting at The University of Toledo about a year and one-half ago. A university official was commenting on what he called "minority representation" on the faculty. The official pointed, apparently with some pride, to "success" in recruiting "minority" faculty members. He did not bother to deny any personal credit for the figures. And then the official astounded me by nonchalantly adding that "The University is a good place for 'minorities.' " At first, I was struck by the arrogance of the comment--I noticed some reaction on the part of some of my African American colleagues as if they were being told how "happy" they were by a "white" "overseer." I was amazed at the

ease--the comfort level, as it were--at which this official offered his unsolicited assessment of the level of satisfaction of other people with life at the University and his presumption of their general approval without batting an eye as he moved to his next point.

I began wondering how he knew that, or at least thought he knew, and why he would make such a statement. I knew his glib assessment was not "right;" but I also recognized that any "correction" or qualification that I might have to offer perhaps was as conjectural as his. He didn't know. I didn't either. I didn't think that anybody did, although I suspected that there could hardly be any shortage of people who would emphatically *claim* that they did. I decided to find out. I decided to make it a personal project as the meeting finally came to an end.

Personal Interviews

I decided to interview faculty members who were members of selected so-called minority groups. I had no doubt that the problem of definition--whom to include and exclude--would be my first hurdle. The issue of identifying "minorities" in a democratic, pluralistic society, especially one with a tradition of *individualism*, raises some interesting, complex theoretical questions, as well as some important public policy problems. I went to the University

Office of Institutional Research. There an administrator stated that he did not think that reliable information on race, ethnicity, and citizenship for the faculty was available; more important, he declared that even if his office had such information, he would and legally could not release it in terms of individuals to me or anyone else on the grounds of privacy rights. I found his declaration more interesting than deterring. My next stop was the office of "Affirmative Action."

The Problem of Definition

An administrator in that office was perplexed at the position taken by the Institutional Research Office. He immediately gave me a list of names of faculty members by "minority" category: " Black," Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaskan native. He said that it was reasonably accurate and complete, adding that compiling such a list is not without problems. He said that the list of "Blacks," i.e. both African Americans and Africans was reliable. Information on citizenship and immigration status, however, was not maintained by the Affirmative Action Office. But he quickly added that it doesn't take long for people at the University to learn "who's who" and "who's what." I agreed.

I decided to concentrate on the list of African American and

Hispanic faculty members because I was particularly interested in the views of those who were born, or at least reared, in the United States. The formal designations in recent years are based on self-definition, although there are people on that list who were listed in earlier days of Affirmative Action as members of one group or another by *ascription* . The Affirmative Action officer pointed out that now anyone can formally declare himself to be a member of any of the designated groups. The Office presumably must accept any self-definition, except for American Indians, in which case, tribal documents may be requested. One member of the faculty, for example, with a universally recognized Spanish surname officially requested, according to the Director, that his name be removed from the list of "Hispanic" faculty members on the grounds that his family origins are European (not Mexican, presumably). Another Spanish surnamed faculty member, by the same token, whose family origins are directly peninsular Spanish, stated that although he *didn't recall ever declaring himself anything in particular*, he saw no reason to remove his name from the list of "Hispanics. " Although he could not be considered "Latino," a term which refers to a person of the Americas specifically, he is, in his view, clearly "Hispanic" (certainly the literal sense of the term). The U.S. Government Equal

Opportunity Commission defines "Hispanic" for purposes of data reporting as persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American origin, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. But the director pointed out that "affirmative action policies were set-up to help people in need, people of color mostly, except for Apalachians in some places." The overwhelming majority of immigrants with Spanish surnames have been primarily mestizos from Latin America, primarily Mexico. Spanish immigration has been statistically negligible. " White European immigrants do not need government protection. ...Affirmative action was not intended for them...." But as one wag put it, "Only in 'America' can a Spaniard not be considered *an* Hispanic!"

The administrator also pointed out that these have been instances of people on this and other campuses declaring themselves to be something they are not, sometimes as a matter of political protest, i.e. opposition to--or even contempt for--policies of "affirmative action." And there have even been a few cynical attempts, he said, to secure some kind of a perceived "career advantage" in intramural politics by individuals conveniently claiming this or that ethnic or racial background, sometimes describing themselves and their lineage(s) in amazingly precise

fractions. In those cases, the administrator indicated, university officials tend to eagerly accept whatever is claimed -- any addition to the lists of "minority" employees helps to take some of the political pressure off the department or the university itself with little or no cost or change in the environment of the institution; so there is good reasons not to ask too many questions. That was particularly so, he added, when the federal and state governments were exerting pressure on public employer groups and colleges and universities to implement meaningful affirmative action plans. As one faculty member put it, "Now, hardly anyone takes that [affirmative action goals and guidelines] too seriously any more, except for conspicuously going through the motions."

Purpose

My purpose in conducting the interviews was, first, to find out what members of minority groups think on a variety of issues associated with life at The University of Toledo and to attempt to draw a composite picture of those views, perceptions, and opinions. Second, I planned to present that information to the members of the faculty who are members of the selected minority groups so that we would at least have some information on the subject. I identified twelve general area of interest: personnel, research, career

advancement, university governance, social life, university goal of recruitment of "minority" group members, affirmative action, tolerance, climate for minority group students, university problems, and recommendations. I began making appointments. The interviews averaged one and one-half hours.

I explained my purpose to each informant and the importance of candor. I requested permission to tape record the conversations for purposes of note-taking. Only one person was uncomfortable with that idea; but even he changed his mind within half- an- hour after initially declining permission to tape record his comments. I assured each informant that I was interested only in a *possible* composite; I promised each interviewee that I would not attribute any statement to him personally or identify him in any way without prior permission; moreover, I promised everyone that comments would not be otherwise attributable indirectly to anyone particularly. My purpose seemed to be clear and my rules of confidentiality evidently acceptable. Only two people declined to participate: one said that he was "too wired into the university" to risk an interview; another said simply that he "did not have any free time."

An important caveat: I do not claim this report to be anything

more than an attempt to satisfy some of my curiosity and share some information for what it is worth with some colleagues. I knew at the outset that some people might be unhappy with some of my "findings," or perhaps surprised; that reactions might range from disagreement and disapproval to agreement and approval. Some will no doubt confuse the message with the messenger; some perhaps might find the profile overdrawn or even unrecognizable. Others would prefer that we not talk--certainly not put anything in writing-- about such matters: "After all, this *is* a university," said one official with barely suppressed disapproval as I described the project to him one day. In any case, I hope it stimulates thought and conversation among us who live and work here about issues that affect us all. I will leave it to others to do "scientific" surveys and submit their finds to appropriate journals for the allotted merit points on annual personnel reports.

The interviews in general went extremely well. Several actually thanked me for doing them and for asking them provocative questions. I received encouragement from the interviewees to the person for the project; and there clearly was interest in the results. In addition to receiving the benefit of their information and insights, it was a pleasure for me to meet and talk with colleagues across the

university about some important issues.

A Special Note about the College of Education

One of the occurrences that surprised me as much as anything was the strength of the views offered by colleagues in my own college. The College of Education, the unit where a proportionally large number of minority group members hold rank, emerges from the interviews as a place on campus with disturbing problems with respect to race relations. Some colleagues are seen by respondents as passively unfriendly to some minority groups, others as effectively removed from the social realities of the world as a result of narrow experiences, many as indifferent and apathetic, and a few as barely concealed bigots. Several administrators were specifically identified as having difficulty, in the words of one member, "relating to minority group members or people whose background is substantially different from theirs," or having any skills in dealing with diversity either in the university or in urban schools, much less embracing such diversity. One factor that may account for such distressing assessments is that the respondents, being colleagues, felt free and comfortable enough to express their thoughts and sentiments with me on the assumption that I, as a fellow member of the ranks, would "understand". Another

possibility is that colleagues were responding to me as a member of a minority group, thereby perhaps contributing to some unmitigated candor or perhaps hyperbole. Another possibility, of course, is that conditions in the College of Education are indeed, as clearly suggested by the interviews, particularly problematic. Perhaps the gap between rhetoric and the admonitions to the prospective teachers, on the one hand, and institutional practices within the college, on the other, is particularly noticeable. Colleges of education take on a special burden indeed when they presume to teach others how to be educational *leaders* , to administer institutions and programs *expertly* , how to teach *professionally* , how to create conditions in schools that promote educational *growth* and achievement, how to *empower* employees and create positive institutional "climates," how to create *exemplary* models for teaching and learning, child-rearing, and even for happy and healthful living. One would think that such a burden would be borne with a degree of humility. What college spokesmen, particularly, (but also others) call for, what they exhort others to do, how they conduct their own affairs, *and how they act on conditions which they themselves can control* obviously invites comparison--and contrast. Perhaps those and other reasons combine.

Over-All Findings

The picture that clearly emerges from the interviewees is that African Americans and Hispanic faculty members, especially the former but to a surprising extent the latter, feel a strong sense of alienation from the University and a corresponding sense of professional and personal isolation. The judgment of the university official that this institution is a "good place [for minority group members] to work" is hardly shared by virtually every member of the faculty who is African American or Hispanic without seemingly a barrage of fatal qualifications. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* over the last year has carried several feature articles describing pervasive feelings of isolation among African American faculty members and students in other urban, predominantly "white" state institutions. "It is amazing that anyone," according to one informant, " would be surprised to learn [that] the University of Toledo is any different."

I expected far more variation in the responses to my questions than I received. As a matter of fact, I suspected at the outset that there might be such a wide range of responses that I would find it

difficult to draw many useful generalizations beyond citing that fact; but even reporting such variation might be a surprise to some on the campus who tend to think of "minorities" in monolithic terms. Instead, some patterns clearly emerged--a group profile--a distillation of responses--was not to be nearly as difficult as I had supposed in the beginning.

Perceptions of "Climate"

It seems to be an article of faith among us Toledoans that whatever else can be said about Toledo, Ohio is that it is indeed *a nice place to raise a family*. In similar conventional wisdom, academicians seem to view universities as relatively "tolerant" places with respect to any number of "differences," i.e. religious affiliations and practices that are not shared by the majority, "alternative 'life- styles', " non-centrist politics and other "discrepancies," unusual dress, and the like. When asked if they saw the University of Toledo as "tolerant" and a place where diversity is positively *valued* , respondents almost uniformly declined to include the University of Toledo in such a description, and especially informants in the College of Education.

Respondents almost to the person said that the University mirrors the Toledo-Area, "conservative," "closed," "small-town." Those who had come here from large cities or major institutions frequently included the word "provincial" in their descriptions. Most African American respondents said that Toledo is probably no less racist than most places (which is not saying much, as some hastened to point out), but a surprising number, including some with Southern connections, said in no uncertain terms that the City, in their view, is as racist as any place in their experience. Virtually all said that the University mirrors the racial attitudes of the area; and several specifically identified the University as a particularly racist institution, in their view. Virtually no one described the University as a place where diversity is valued or encouraged; the consensus seems to be that the contrary generally is the case. "Keeping things as they are, quiet and comfortable-- avoiding unpleasantness is the dominant cultural characteristic of the University," one person suggested. Another person said that U.T. is a "tolerant" place, but he used the term pejoratively. He drew a distinction between *tolerance* and *acceptance*. "Differences" are tolerated here, at least outwardly, but *only* that, he said. "I personally haven't experienced any overt hostility or discrimination

that I know of, but you can never be sure. ...I suppose it is only a matter of time. Everyone here is *so* polite. That seems typical of the Midwest, politeness-- too polite, sometimes. ...But it is not easy being [a minority group member] here. There' re just not very many of us, you know."

I noted an interesting difference in responses on this point between the African American respondents and Hispanics. Hispanics tended to respond to the question of "tolerance" in terms of cultural and regional considerations. Virtually all the Hispanic respondents had been reared elsewhere and shared the view that the University largely reflects the immediate community. One informant suggested that it is not that people at the University are particularly intolerant. "It is that most of them [Native Toledoans] have really never had the opportunity--or the need--*to learn* to be tolerant of differences in any real sense of the term. 'Toleedo' is Toledo," he said. "And it is a long way even to Ann Arbor," he added. Another commented that "diversity is o.k. in the abstract-- everybody here is emphatically in favor of it.... unless someone practices it in some significant way. ...As for tolerance, some of us take pride in not tolerating intolerance. ...we seem to be tolerant, as long as peculiarities don't really matter and [that] we remain

untouched on a daily basis by **real** differences. "

Another respondent indicated that the question of tolerance and the positive valuing of diversity are largely moot for both students and faculty, and especially for administrators. It is the nature of administration, he said, to attract, reward, and generally encourage people who will maintain the *status quo* . They like the familiar; and they bureaucratically "reproduce" in their own image. As far as the faculty and students are concerned, "if anybody has a different idea or wants to do things differently in any serious way, he soon learns that this is not the place for him. He either conforms [to expectations], or he doesn't last long. ...But most of the people are here because *they don't want it to be any different.* That is why they are here. It is like a small town here. It is comfortable *if* you belong. And if you belong, you *are* comfortable."

The College of Education, an Apparent Special Case

Respondents in the College of Education were particularly strong in their views with respect to questions of tolerance and diversity in that division of the University. It should be noted that the College of Education is one of the places where minority faculty members are relatively concentrated. Almost everyone acknowledges that schools and departments of education are

"different" in many key ways from the rest of the university. The history of colleges of education has been a stormy one in higher education from the earliest days; and its continuing struggle to achieve both legitimacy in the academic culture of higher education or credibility in the professional life of practitioners in the schools remains unabated; the twin goals remain evidently as elusive as ever. Similarly, the sociology of teacher training and of school-teaching as an occupation clearly has much to suggest from a contemporary perspective with respect to "selection factors" (including socio-economic, or class, origins of its practitioners), quality of its programs, relative test performance of both its undergraduate and graduate students compared to others in the University, relative prestige, scholarly attributes of its professorsiate, etc. Scholarly literature aside, one need only to walk through the halls of Snyder Memorial which houses the University's College of Education to appreciate the stark homogeneity of "Education majors" with respect to race as compared even to the rest of the Bancroft Campus, or the "main campus," as it has been called over many years. And the the decided feminine cast of the College of Education is universally recognized, especially among the male population. That homogeneity characterizes the College of Education despite

the fact that the majority of those students will eventually find employment in American public schools and urban neighborhoods which are dramatically changing. It is perhaps against that backdrop that informants in the College of Education responded noticeably in *college* terms, unlike respondents from outside the college, who tended to respond in either departmental or University terms (or both); and respondents' assessment of the climate in, or perhaps *of*, the college of education is unmistakable clear. The college of education, in their view, is not a place that can be described as generally "tolerant"; nor is it a place where diversity is valued, repeated references to "multicultural education" (for others, it would seem) in their promotional materials notwithstanding. One respondent recalled that it was the college of education at the University of Toledo which committed itself ideologically beginning in the early 1970s for over a decade to what was called "Competency-Based [sic] Teacher Education" (c.b.t.e.) for which it continues, astonishingly, to to claim some credit. "The significance of c.b.t.e. was that a major part of a university which at least espouses academic freedom adopted and attempted to *impose* [through controlling state department of education certification standards] a vulgar and virulently anti-intellectual *doctrine* , which from a

political point of view could easily have come from the writings of Italy's Giovanni Gentile during World War II. "...No tolerance of differences there. And precious little allowance for other points of view. ...That particular banality eventually fell by the wayside and funds for such programs evaporated, but a climate of orthodoxy on most educational practices and issues remains as part of the culture of the college, coupled with hand-holding with those who control state certification standards." On the other hand, another respondent, also discussing that same program, commented that "c.b.t.e., for all its problems, helped protect minority students because the assignments were so mechanical and standards so minimal for everybody that the effects of race prejudices were lessened.... In those days, everybody was busy as bees and got check marks for simple tasks completed."

The field of psychology both as a research enterprise and as a clinical field has long been troubled by an "identity crisis" of its own. The issues involved seldom seem to trouble very many in teacher training institutions; indeed, one wonders if very many people are aware of them or take much of an interest in such matters. Despite the marginal status of its parent discipline, educational psychology (or "The Psychology of Education," as it were) tends to dominate or

at least thoroughly permeate instructional models in education schools, despite the fact, as one observer put it, that "it is typically regarded as an ersatz science by many people in the so-called 'hard sciences' or unworthy of much attention by others in the humanities." Worse, *particular* schools of psychology have been known to "capture" entire departments and programs through "intellectually incestuous" hiring practices, thereby exerting a disproportionate share of influence in undergraduate teacher training programs especially. Thus, rarefied models not infrequently assume the mantle of doctrine and orthodoxy, authoritatively presented, of course, under the aegis of "research", despite the conclusion of some observers that the field had yielded precious little for education as either a theoretical field of inquiry or an applied field. Anybody who is not himself a product of such training will recognize "psychologism" in the culture of an education school that borders on the religious on complex questions of teaching and learning, curriculum, testing, classroom management, and human development, etc. Such is hardly the climate for divergent views or alternative ways of approaching problems or of working, or even of living.

Teacher training departments and programs, as almost

everyone knows, do not enjoy the same prestige status as most other professional fields on almost any campus. Indeed, the professional fields in education, namely teaching (early childhood, elementary, and secondary), administration, and counseling are almost universally viewed as marginal, and even "second class"; further, there is evidence that those attitudes are concomitantly "internalized" within those ranks, paralleling other marginal groups in the general society . And oppressed groups are not known for their spirit of tolerance or acceptance of dissent on intellectual or moral grounds, as well. That is no less true in "ghettos" of stratified university complexes. An Education faculty member said that "tolerance and celebration of diversity come in communities where people feel safe and secure, personally and professionally. The hunger for professional status [in Education] borders on the obsessional," adding that, above all, "social *respectability* in thought, word, and deed--and even appearance [if formal instructions to our students from the field office is any guide] characterizes the *petit bourgeoisie* which our students typify culturally." Ironically, one respondent was sharply critical of others in this respect. He suggested that some fellow minority faculty members were patently overcompensatory--hyper-correct and

corrective-- in their efforts simply " to survive " to "fit- in," at least to the extent possible, and perhaps even to "succeed," in terms of "upward mobility" in the bureaucratic structure. "Those folks are as intolerant as anybody else, maybe more so as far as minorities are concerned." That person then reached for a copy of Toni Morrison's novel, *The Bluest Eye* , and said that he thought Morrison put it so well. Referring to middle-class African Americans, he asked me if I minded if he read a passage:

These particular brown girls from Mobile and Aiken are not like some of their sisters. They are not fretful, nervous, or shrill.... They are as sweet and as plain as buttercakes.... These sugar brown Mobile girls move through the streets without a stir. ...They sing second soprano in the choir, and although their voices are clear and steady, they are never picked to solo. They are in the second row, white blouses starched, blue skirts almost purple from ironing. ...

They go to land-grant colleges, normal schools, and learn how to do the white man's work with refinement; home economics to prepare his food; teacher education to instruct black children in obedience; music to sooth the weary master and entertain his blunted soul. Here they learn the rest of the lesson begun in those soft houses with porch swings and pots of bleeding heart; how to behave. The careful development of thrift, patience, high morals, and good manners. In short, how to get rid of the funkiness. The dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotions. --Toni Morrison

With respect to tolerating differences and valuing actual conditions of diversity, what worked for them or what they hope will work for them, he explained, is what they insist on for others.

"...Sometimes they are just afraid to do anything, even if they have an opportunity to act. Sometimes they just don't *know* any better. Sometimes they wouldn't have it [present conditions] any other way as long as they are here as a scarce commodity."

It may be too much to expect a liberal spirit of tolerance and celebration of diversity to take deep root in the soil of orthodoxy or marginality.

"Social Climate"

When asked about University friends and opportunities to "socialize" with others, respondents typically began by pointing out how very busy they were and how little time they had to "do much socializing." That was almost a uniform response. It may be that academic life attracts people generally who are generally more self-contained or perhaps generally less gregarious than some other walks; and perhaps the nature of the work requires considerable solitude. It would be interesting to make a variety of comparisons on this point across campus. Nonetheless, when asked about being invited to the homes of colleagues, going out to dinner, attending athletic games, going to movies, cultural events, etc., it was evident that *social intercourse at least with white colleagues generally was narrowly circumscribed and sharply limited.* Most social activity

was quasi-official, e.g. department "get-togethers," retirement dinners, etc. Most indicated that more intimate social interactions with university people were by and large with other minority group members; but even here, there were frequent references to the difficulty of finding the time, working around busy schedules, etc. One person said that he didn't like *anybody*, except his dog; and he said he wasn't sure about even liking himself all that much! He said it in such a way that I could not be sure that he wasn't serious. And I didn't pursue it. Several said that their closest friends were people who did not work for the University at all, coupled with observations about the relative paucity of "minority" colleagues. The interviews suggest that African Americans, particularly, may find themselves isolated from each other as well; several referred to the lack of cohesion of the African American organizations and the near impossibility of getting together, except for some crisis of some sort. Hispanic respondents echoed similar sentiments. Almost everyone pointed to the cordial, even friendly, atmosphere of the work place; but again, that seemed not to extend beyond the job. Whatever the reasons, "minority" faculty members, including Hispanics, on the campus of the University of Toledo evidently feel socially isolated from their colleagues. Again, to what extent they differ from "white,"

or "Anglo" faculty members in that respect, or to what extent that they even care, are interesting, but unanswered, questions.

Perceptions of "Recruitment" Efforts and "Affirmative Action"

University officials have frequently stated their wish to increase the number of minority group members at all levels. When minority faculty members were asked to react to that statement, their response was unequivocal: <u>They do not believe it and said so</u>. Virtually to the person, respondents stated that they regard the professed official desire to increase the number of minority group members, at all levels as little more than empty rhetoric. Several of them added, however, that the exception on campus was white women, at least in some areas. "Even under [U.T. President] McComas, said one respondent, there was far more talk than action. Since then, there is not even that much pretense."

Perhaps the most startling point that emerged from the conversations with informants had to do with affirmative action, in terms of both effectiveness and goals. With respect to goals, respondents were unanimous in acknowledging the need for a diverse, or pluralistic, student body, faculty, staff, and

administration. Almost every response began with that recognition, although several respondents pointed out that such a need is not necessarily generally acknowledged by the student body, faculty, staff, and administration. But "Affirmative Action" as a matter of policy elicited very strong, albeit diverse, reactions. A clear picture emerged from the interviews: **Affirmative Action at the University of Toledo is viewed by respondents as discredited; and its record by and large is seen as one of failure in terms of meeting its stated goals.** One respondent stated that "the Affirmative Action office is designed to keep the heat [from minority group advocates] off the President of the University. It has nothing to do with protecting or advancing the interests of minority groups on this campus, or of promoting justice. ...affirmative action officers are expected to calm minorities and keep us calm...quiescent." Some of the affirmative action officers over the years were referred to by the respondents during the course of the conversations; generally, affirmative action officers were seen by respondents as <u>ineffective agents of change or even of advocacy.</u> "Anybody that is serious about affirmative action in all liklihood would not get hired in the first place; and if he did, he probably wouldn't last long, or want to, for that matter," explained one former holder of that position.

"Employment--a job-- is important to anyone, including affirmative action officers," he added. Another former U.T. affirmative action officer in a separate conversation described the job as one "doomed to failure" by the very nature of the position; "After all, The Director of Affirmative Action serves at the pleasure of the President," he hastened to point out.

"We have the worst of both worlds," stated one respondent. "Affirmative Action as an idea and as public policy is offensive to most white Americans, including our colleagues. Most of them think of it as 'reverse discrimination' and *themselves* as victims. Can you believe it? But the worst part is that they think affirmative action here and in other places is really working.... that it is helping minorities get jobs that they probably aren't really qualified for or maybe even deserve. The fact of the matter is that it [affirmative action] is a sham, but it helps whites assuage their guilt or keeps them from doing what needs to be done to equalize opportunity. They think that affirmative action settles the score and evens out the playing field. Can you believe that? They actually think that affirmative action is racism in reverse!" Although most of the other informants were not as adamant as he, virtually all of them shared his view. One who didn't, however, stated that he

was glad affirmative action policies were in effect when he was hired. "I wouldn't be here if it weren't for affirmative action. If people think I got the job because I am [a minority group member], so be it. I am here. And I need the work! If we are here, we are not qualified. If we are not here, it is because we're *not* qualified." Affirmative Action may not be ideal. But it is better than nothing. And it is better than before."

One of the side-effects of affirmative action as a policy here and elsewhere is the wedge that has been driven between men of color and women in general. One respondent recalled the case of a department chairman who had been previously hostile to affirmative action "in principle" suddenly changing his mind one day when a white candidate, a women, whom he favored for a faculty appointment appeared to have insufficient support from a search committee. "His passionate pleas for affirmative action as he argued the case of his candidate over the other candidates, who happened to men, was nothing short of inspirational." Another informant put it this way: "White males eventually will eventually have to give up some power. They will *have* to share. It will not be too hard to persuade with a little pressure to make room in the power structure for their wives and daughters. Maybe even their neighbors and

friends. *They* will be, naturally, *well-qualified* in their eyes. To them, it will be only fair." Another respondent, an African American woman, noting the progress women had made on campus posited that "it will be sad if we succeed in getting a 'piece of the pie' for ourselves *as women* without changing the system for the benefit of everyone, including [minority group] men." However, "It may be," suggested one male respondent, "that the bonds, or the interests, among women, even between black and white, are *stronger* than those between African American men and women. Or it is possible that everyone is in it for himself--or herself--and that *every* agenda, especially as it relates to jobs and money, is really a private one."

In his analysis of affirmative action as policy, a respondent stated that in his view affirmative action is seen by the majority of white colleagues and particularly by college and university administrators as designations of positions for people of color. There are various positions, he said, in student affairs, admissions, "intervention programs" the affirmative action director's job itself that are set aside, or relegated, to "minority employees." Most of them are non-academic, low- status easily eliminated positions in administrative support services. "In exchange for those jobs, whites tend to keep the good ones for themselves, except, of course, for the

highly visible tokens." He stated that as far as faculty positions are concerned, even there some positions are in effect designated for people who are members of minority groups, for example ethnic specializations in history, the social sciences, African American literature, etc. And "anything having to do with "multicultural" is probably a ghetto position in all liklihood," he said. Filling those positions, he argued, cannot be counted legitimately as affirmative action because the university would have little or no credibility if it appointed whites to those positions. Yet this is what "affirmative action" has been about for the most part, in his view. He went on:

"The problem is that search committees for both faculty and administrative positions composed of white people appreciate the fact that models, concepts and even issues are similar across many disciplines; and skills learned in one area--one arena--are transferable to other jobs. That is why it is so easy for white people to move around from job to job, across fields, areas, and institutions. Often times, they are friends besides. Those very same people require very specific and highly specialized training *and* lengthy experience in multiple arenas which they regard as *qualifications* for *us* , that is, to be appointed for a job. That is the failure of affirmative action. White academicians find it difficult when

considering our applications to recognize and appreciate professionally [or occupationally] analogous learnings and experiences. But it comes so very easily and naturally when they are doing it for their own. Check the backgrounds of the good-paying positions held by whites on campus in terms of credentials and prior work experience. And then make a comparison."

Another respondent had a similar observation: "Whites seem to think of themselves as personally competent and educated; they seem to look at us at needing specialized training and background to be considered for most positions. It is a form of tracking, but at the University level." Still another offered this comment: "White administrators have difficulty seeing us in anything but a supplicant's role; the role of patron is deeply ingrained in college deans... and many administrators are threatened by an intelligent or well- educated [minority member] male... he is likely to be not so *grateful* or have a strong need *to please* ... . Or, God forbid, he may have ideas of his own!"

Hispanics/African Americans

An interesting difference was noted in the use of the word "minority" by the few Hispanic and African Americans respondents. "African [or Afro-] American," "Black," and "minority"

(in the singular or plural) generally were used *interchangably* by African Americans in their responses. Some of them made it a point to include Hispanics as they spoke of "minorities," but at times it seemed that the inclusion may have been triggered by my presence in some instances; or perhaps the use of the word "minority" did in fact refer to all the designated groups. The Hispanic respondents, on the other hand, to the person pointed out disapprovingly sometime during the interviews that the term "minority" was a universally recognized synonym (One person said "code word") specifically for African Americans. Apart from questions of efficacy or policy, Hispanics were noticeably unenthusiastic about affirmative action here and elsewhere partly because in their view it serves the interests of African Americans and ignores the legitimate aspirations and problems faced by Hispanics, problems they regard as serious and long-ignored. Clearly, they do not look to the office, at least on this campus, as either willing or even able to assist them in their goals of creating a pluralistic environment to include Hispanics in full measure. Some of the Hispanics, unlike the majority of African American respondents, expressed reservations or concerns about affirmative action as a matter of *public policy*, or principle, but they clearly shared the view of others, again, that

affirmative action as an effort on the part of the institution represented little more than apparently grudging compliance with public law.

Opportunities

(promotions, , research, career advancement, participation in governance)

Advancement in academic rank and tenure are important concerns to almost any academician. And the matter of salary can scarcely be ignored by anyone, either. I was interested in what informants thought their opportunities were in various areas compared to others. Distilling this set of responses was more difficult because of differences across disciplines and fields. As far as research opportunities are concerned, virtually everyone pointed out that there is no shortage of scholarly work that needs to be done. However, many respondents pointed out in the course of the interviews that their specializations in several instances were peripheral to or marginal within the discipline, or perhaps even a newly-emerging discipline. Several mentioned that they were interested in "minority" perspectives or issues which were viewed

suspiciously by their colleagues. "The research I am interested in is not accepted as *valid* [emphasis added] by others in my department, here and in most places, yet." Similar sentiments were expressed by several others. It was evident that a large per centage of the informants were interested in and committed to issues and methods, particularly in the social sciences and the humanities, as well as the college of education, that are not accepted as fully valid or whose pedigree in some sense is regarded as dubious by colleagues. For those scholars, opportunities for promotion and salary, which are tied to scholarly production, were thought to be relatively limited.

Conversely, there were some who suggested that they were trained and interested in mainstream problems and methods, but their colleagues wanted them to provide the department with a stock "Minority Voice " which, in the words of one informant, was thought to be *politically* needed ostensibly to "round out the department." One scholar intimated that he knew what they wanted when he was first interviewed and agreed to play that role in order to get the appointment, adding that he learned it on the job. "Instant credibility," he called it."That is what they wanted and that is what they got."

Virtually all the informants thought that tenure would not be, or was not, much of a problem at The University of Toledo. The vast majority of the respondents did state that they had to work harder than their white colleagues each step of the way. Most of them said they thought that opportunities for grants particularly were limited because they were not in crucial friendship networks, which they regarded as prerequisite. "Travel opportunities, full access to support services, advance word on career moves, inside information on personnel matters are the property of the in-group," explained an informant. "We are outsiders glimpsing inside--and guessing, sometimes hoping, and wondering-- most of the time," he added. Whatever each called it, almost everyone referred to information "loops" or "circles" or networks of one sort or another in which people were *allied* to secure grants, serve as impartial referees for each other's articles, publish one another's papers, assist in placing people on regional and national panels for scholarly visibility, etc. Minority faculty members clearly believe themselves to be "non-members" of such groups except for networks that are "out-group specific", i.e. alternative associations and caucuses, specialized interest groups, and the like.

When asked about opportunities to participate in University

governance (Faculty Senate, personnel committees, crucial search committees, etc.), most respondents stated that they did not participate or participated very little. When pressed for an explanation, many said that they did not have the time or that they wished to pursue other interests. Most referred to "closed shops", bloc voting, the aforementioned networks, etc., that in effect rendered it difficult to impossible to participate. As one respondent put it, "When people think of us [in terms of university governance], they think of us for committees that don't really do much or are window dressing. Look at the committees that have some "say- so" in terms of awarding grants, salary and promotion committees, search committees--it is the same people over and over and over. And that doesn't include us!"

When asked about **salaries,** respondents as a group seemed remarkably uninformed about the formal processes of determining salaries for faculty members. As a group, they seemed disinterested and even uninterested. When asked about how their salaries compared with others with the same time and grade, most stated that they did not have sufficient information to make comparisons or discuss specific equity issues. One person said that "They're going to give me what they want to give me, so I don't worry about it."

A recurring comment was that salary was a hush-hush affair for the most part. It seems to be a matter of professorial etiquette to refrain from discussing such matters in any public forum. "In my department, nobody talks much about salaries. People with the big increases aren't anxious for everybody to know about it; and the rest of us are outside looking in for the most part." We all pretend that we don't really care all that much and that things must be running smoothly." In the College of Education, however, several respondents reported that the so-called merit process there is very political. In the words of one respondent, "If you serve on the [personnel] committee, you do well. If you can't serve, get somebody on who will look out for you." He continued: It is the same old story. People who get the high raises every year are convinced to the depths of their souls that they deserve them and that those who don't, don't. But it is the same set up [as in extramural life]. The winners control the game. The losers don't have an equal chance, except for the tokens who do what they're told. But whatever they call it, it is sure as hell isn't based on merit!"

A review of respondents' comments clearly suggests that the merit process for determining salaries in the College of Education has the least confidence in terms of perceived fairness and validity

among minority group members in that college. One informant expressed doubts that the majority of the administration faculty could make legitimate judgements about anybody's scholarship, even if they wanted to. "Image, lots of paper, and busy, busy activity are what count in our college, " he stated. The comments from respondents from almost all of the other colleges contained references to standards, criteria and other academic considerations. In the cases of the Education and Community colleges, however, comments generally centered on people who worked hard and long on improving their salaries by controlling the apparatus for determining them. Moreover, there was little expressed confidence in review processes for appeals, not only within the college but through the University structure (the University Committee on Academic Personnel, the Conference Council. The latter groups were viewed, in the words of one respondent, as essentially " bureaucratic instrumentalities to validate the self-serving decisions of the others."

Ghetto jobs for minorities

Hardly anyone believes that members of minority groups should be excluded from almost any college campus. The issue seems to be not whether to assimilate minorities, but how to do so.

Several informants referred to ghetto university jobs, positions that in their judgment are consigned to members of minority groups. As one respondent put it, "When a search committee of whites or a typical dean sees a minority [group member], it is very difficult for them to see that person in a mainstream position. The first impulse almost always is to put him or her in some spot 'to deal with minority concerns'." According to that respondent, the person's minority status is the primary determinant for job consideration, rather than what the candidate can do or what that person knows; "In most cases, that person is never given a chance. It is *presumed* that the minority is interested in a ghetto job."

The College of Education

Referring to what he called the "lily white" character of the College of Education, one respondent in that college said that some people "try to explain it away by saying that [minority] students are in medical school at Stanford or at the Harvard Law School. And good professors cannot be attracted to places like the University of Toledo. ...You can imagine how that makes me feel when I hear that!" Another respondent used the term "bigot" to refer to professors in other colleges who harbor "prejudices" about the college of education; that person was obviously not referring to race or

ethnicity, but to college membership within the university structure. Similar meaning shifts occurred during the course of the interviews with the term "ghetto," which was used by several of the interviewees. Sometimes it was used in a European sense referring to separateness or separation of a culture of sorts; other times, the term was used as an American might use the term in reference to a slums or something undesirable; "Baltic Avenue and Mediterranean on the Monopoly Board!" as one informant put it.

One of the salient points that emerged from the interviews had to do with encouraging minority group youngsters to enter a field in Education. Despite the almost universal cry for more educators from minority groups and the under representation of minority group members among the students, and especially the conspicuous absence of even a single minority group member within the administration of the college of education, one respondent confessed that he could not in good conscience encourage African Americans and other minority group members to enter any program in the College of Education. "The name of the games these days is credentials--paper [as opposed to qualifications]. Students need to go to prestige schools and major in prestige departments. That is especially important for us. If a person majors in

educational administration, the assumption ," including that held by [minority group] professors in other fields, "is that a person could not cut it any place else and had to settle for second best... degree for the sake of a degree. " In discussing the need for role models and the shortage of minority group students interested in a teaching career, a respondent in another College of the University offered a different perspective: Drawing a distinction between "paper credentials" and job performance, "The best way to deal with discriminations," he stated, "is through credentials. We have to have more paper qualifications than white people for the same position. If we have enough, they can't turn us down all the time. At least they can't completely overlook us!" The respondent stated that job descriptions should be very specific in terms of skills, tasks, and responsibilities to make it very difficult *not* to offer the position to a minority candidate who has the required so-called qualifications. "I favor degrees in how to administer brick buildings facing north and majors in how to teach left-handed kids who were born in July.... The more details--the more specific--the better," he said.

"Professionalism" and the College of Education

Social and intellectual historians of the United States provide

rich information on the professional developments of law, medicine, and the like. Those and other so-called professions have come a long way from the early days of the the Republic. The "professionalization" of teaching and related school fields has not been so successful. The government, ranging from the state legislatures to local boards of education, clearly have a legitimate interest in who is eligible, or not eligible, to hold positions in public schools. But unlike other fields, the question of what constitutes proper preparation for such positions and the criteria for eligibility are unsettled matters indeed, to say nothing of the problem of standards which plagues schools of education. Education deans, as certification officers of the State, are constantly on the alert to efforts to bypass their organizations in almost any question of licensure; and interests groups have worked closely with administrative counterparts in public schools and in state departments of education to control access to professional positions making the college of education the primary, if not the *exclusive* , port of entry, to the great consternation, of course, of many academicians in the liberal arts, professionals in other fields, and educated people generally. The result to some extent is what is called in economics a radical monopoly. Serious questions involving

the preparation of teachers and administrators and other professionals is thereby easily avoided; and the bureaucratic success of extant programs is guaranteed by the government through state certification, regardless of any relationship to teaching, learning in the schools and elsewhere or any other consideration beyond providing work for those who are ascribed experts and self-declared specialists. Ironically, the less scientific the field, the more specific and rigid the certification standards. Thus, it is extremely difficult to become a teacher, especially an elementary school teacher, or a school administrator, regardless of academic background and preparation without a massive commitment to additional course work, much of which is generally thought to be highly questionable in value. And "mental illness" has become such an industry and the society so "psychologized" that even the innocuous term of "counseling, " which friends, and certainly teachers, have been doing for centuries is increasingly assuming legal status in some states; whether such developments represent any improvement in the provision of mental health services to students is, of course, highly arguable. The net result is that sometimes people, including members of minority groups find their way into public schools as the path of least resistance and as a

means of access to bourgeois respectability. And there are those particularly talented members of minority groups who are seriously interested, but who are discouraged from entering the colleges of education as undergraduates by the few minority group members they find at the University. Moreover, the relative low prestige of professional education programs cannot escape their notice; and many, no doubt, lose interest by the lack of challenge, to say nothing of what they could expect to find in terms of salary and working conditions following graduation compared to other fields. And, again, those from other fields or who have pursued other careers and then decide to enter teaching are faced with university requirements for certification that are thought to be excessive in terms of what might be needed in terms of time commitment, to say nothing of the cost of course work which is thought to be unnecessary, given other "life" experiences. The very legitimacy of those requirements is questionable in the minds of many. Those factors serve to discourage minority members from entering the teaching and administrative ranks of the public schools. On the other hand, there are those who have such credentials, have paid for what they view as legitimate access to the profession and are eager to ensure that those requirements remain in place or are reinforced,

even though it might mean that other members of minority groups are in effect not permitted to their ranks without securing the "proper credentials." When reminded about accreditation citations purportedly for excellence, one observer replied: "We should not allow ourselves to be fooled by taking the acolades of the accredtors too seriously. Members of those associations, particularly NCATE (Natinal Council on Accreditation for Teacher Education) sometimes are mutual admiration and benefit societies. It is like government--utilities frequently capture the agency that is supposed to regulate them." The accrediting agencies, he went on to say, need the universities much more than the universities need them. "Besides," he added, "the Lake Wobegon Effect is fully inforce when the accreditors file their reports, you can be sure!"

Inter Minority-Group Relations

Each respondent was asked to describe relations, at least in his view, between minority groups on campus, namely African Americans and Hispanics. Almost every person pointed out that there seemed to be virtually no contact between Hispanics and African Americans on this campus. At the same time, there seemed

to be a reflexive and uniform response about "all of us being in the same boat" and a need for unity, or solidarity. And the majority of the respondents seemed to genuinely lament the current state of affairs between the two groups. When pressed for explanations, several African Americans pointed to the small number of Hispanics on campus. Others suggested that since there is little *intra* -group contact that it is no surprise that there is not much *inter* -group intercourse. When pressed further, however, some observations emerged recurringly from the conversations. Several Hispanics emphatically objected to what they saw as the race-specific mission of the office of affirmative action, although they regarded the office as largely impotent; and they objected to the increasing identity of the terms "minority" and "African American" or "black" when used by both African Americans and "Anglos," or "whites," even in the mass media. As one person put it, "If they mean African American, they should say African American. If we are not included in the word 'minority,' except for securing funds and other benefits, we are being *used.* " Another Hispanic respondent suggested that African Americans were very ethnocentric with respect to problems they face in American society: "The statistics for Hispanics are equally tragic by almost any standard social indicator, but many African

Americans, including academicians, do not seem to be aware of those conditions." Another Hispanic respondent noted that the terms "black" and "white" are absurd. They are so-called black and white only in relation to each other in the United States. They are *political* terms that are not helpful in either understanding or solving problems." He noted further that Mexicans and Mexican Americans, who constitute the majority of Hispanics in the U.S. and African Americans have had relatively little contact with each other. "Each has had to learn to deal with the dominant groups, but not with each other." He added that "there appears to be major cultural differences between the two groups," acknowledging that some divisions may be likened to dogs scrapping over bones. Most African Americans stated that they had little opportunity to know or interact personally with Hispanics on this campus or anywhere else. One African American, however, stated, with apologies to me for having to say so, that he resented Hispanic claims for inclusion in Affirmative Action. "Every time someone says 'affirmative action' or 'minority', Hispanics seem to line up for their 'share' without having earned the *right* to *any* share, or the size they claim." In his view the quality and severity of problems faced by African Americans are unique; and the solutions and assistance must be

unique to African Americans, even when the term "minority" is used, in his words, as a "political term." Other African American respondents affirmed that "minorities" ought to mean all minorities, not only African Americans. At some point during the interviews, virtually all respondents, African Americans and Hispanics alike, referred to the racism of American society that did not exclude universities generally and the University of Toledo in particular; moreover, ther were frequent references to the "tried and true tactic of divide and conquer." At the conclusion of their responses to this item, respondents almost uniformly pointed to the need for more inter-group solidarity.

What Needs to be Done?

In response to questions about what problems need to be addressed with respect to human relations and generally about what needs to be done, respondents were virtually unanimous in calling for more diversity in the student body, faculty, and administration of the University of Toledo. When asked about special "awareness" days, minority group "celebrations," the majority stated that such events serve purposes for students and

others, but most such activities were dismissed as window dressing and rhetorical. As one respondent put it, "slogans are o.k. if they are backed up by something. Otherwise, they are dangerous if people think all that is needed is to say the words and beat the drum." Virtually all respondents stated that the president of the University was responsible for the social agenda of the institution, including developing plans not only to combat campus racism, but to create an environment characterized by diversity, respect for diversity, and equality. Respondents almost to the person stated emphatically the top administrators set the tone for the institution; several suggested that the trustees should hold the president accountable for achieving certain goals within a specified time period and that he, in turn, should hold the vice presidents and college deans, accountable for meeting goals within their organizational units. Several stated that special advocacy groups should be established not only to hear cases of discrimination, but to serve as energetic advocacy roles for minority groups, and individuals from among those groups, on this campus. Virtually none had much confidence in existing so-called faculty committees, for example the Conference Council, the University Committee on Academic Personnel, college and departmental personnel committees, and

the like because, in the words of one respondent, those groups "represent the interests of the *status quo* . with them and people like them at the top of the pyramid." He added: "I don't think we can expect any real help from them. ...Their job, and they do a damn good job of it, is to validate what is--not to work toward what should be!" Several suggested that a group be established to specifically monitor salaries and personnel actions of members of minority groups and provide such information to members of the minority groups and the central administration. One person called for a systematic historical study of salaries of minority group members and promotion and tenure records to see how minority group members compare with whites on the campus, as well as a profile on hiring practices. Most of the respondents called for abolishing the office of affirmative action office or radically restructuring it, so that it is made to serve its purpose and enjoy a reputation for doing so. Several called for the dismissal of a surprising number of specific administrators and department chair persons from their administrative roles on the grounds that they were overly hostile to members of minority groups , who are incapable, or unwilling, of dealing with problems, aspirations and needs of the members of such groups, and who are content to dwell in an ivory tower

oblivious to the problems of the world. Some called for a reexamination of the role of the College of Education in the University and in the larger Toledo community; others pointed to a need for fundamentally restructuring the College to reflect social diversity; In the words of one respondent, "The College of Education must be recreated to acknowledge and confront diversity, to intelligently accomodate it in its make-up and in its programs. Perhaps eventually it will learn to embrace it." With respect to urban environments, he added that "We have worked a long time with the suburbs and even the small, rural districts. But even though we have some good people here, as a college, we don't have much to offer cities. Our specialty seems to white, middle-class schools and people, unless, of course, there are grants available."

When asked about a prospective look, the most disturbing and saddening part of this entire exercise is that the majority of the respondents indicated that they did not think that things were going to get better with regard to these problems at the University of Toledo in the foreseeable future. To the extent that such is the case at The University of Toledo and other institutions of higher learning, each is left to make his own accomodation.